**Docudrama**

Chekhov’s stimulus for writing was real life. He is the master of everyday natural dialogue. In 1888, in a letter to a friend, he wrote, “In my opinion it is not the writer’s job to solve such problems as God, pessimism, etc; his job is merely to record who, under what conditions, said or thought what about God or pessimism. The artist is not meant to be a judge of his characters and what they say; his only job is to be an impartial witness. I heard two Russians in a muddled conversation about pessimism, a conversation that solved nothing; all I am bound to do is reproduce that conversation exactly as I heard it. Draw­ing conclusions is up to the jury, that is, the readers. My only job is to be talented, that is, to know how to distinguish important testi­mony from unimportant, to place my char­acters in the proper light and speak their language.” (http://threesisters.gallery-forster. com/about\_the\_play.htm; Letter to Alexei Suvorin, May 30, 1888.)

Capture on paper a two-person ordinary, everyday verbal exchange that you witness in real life. This may be in the school cafeteria, waiting for their bus, or even at the dinner table. Record the dialogue exactly as you hear it, including non-verbal words and sounds such as um, ah, sighs, or laughter. The length should be approximately one page.

At the end of your play, categorize this conversation. Are your characters talking about the weather, relationships, etc…? Are they complaining about how miserable they are? Hopeful about the future? Wishing they were somewhere else?

**A Day in the Life Photo Essay**

Read this quote by Chekhov: “One has to write what one sees, what one feels, truthfully, sincerely. I am often asked what it was that I was wanting to say in this or that story. To these questions I never have any answer. There is nothing I want to say. My concern is to write, not to teach! And I can write about anything you like. ... Tell me to write about this bottle, and I will give you a story entitled ‘The Bottle.’ Living truthful images generate thought, but thought cannotcreate an image.” (http://threesisters.gallery-forster.com/about\_the\_play.htm; Letter to Alexei Suvorin, May 30, 1888.)

Create a photo essay about a day in your life. A photo essay is simply a collection of images that are placed in a spe­cific order to tell the progression of events, emotions, or concepts. Visit this website for examples: http://photophilan­thropy.org/galleries/explore-essays/ Much like Chekhov’s blending of the objective and subjective, photo essays combine art with journalism. During Chekhov’s time, photog­raphy became a popular pastime. In his play, *The Three Sisters*, this new trend can be seen in the character of Lieutenant Fedotik who is always snapping photos. The birth of pho­tography also greatly influenced the Realist movement. People could look into the eyes of someone they had never met or seen before and feel a connection with them that tran­scended time and distance.

Using a digital camera, take photos over a 24-hour period. In order to find the “living truthful images,” do not prearrange or stage anything. Then, choose and sequence ten photo­graphs that capture the emotional journey of your day from your unique point of view. The photos should flow together and be visu­ally connected. Be sure to write out captions for each photo.